

From: "Johnston, Sadhu" <Sadhu.Johnston@vancouver.ca>

To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"
"Singh, Sandra" <Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca>

Date: 5/21/2020 9:01:38 AM

Subject: Memo: Response to West End Journal's questions to City Council in regard to COVID-19 response

Attachments: ACCS - GM - Memo (Mayor & Council) - Responses to Questions re ERCs (2020-05-20).pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Attached is a memo from the General Manager of Arts, Culture, and Community Services, Sandra Singh regarding Response to West End Journal's questions to City Council in regard to COVID-19 response.

- Background: Emergency Response Centres (ERC) have been activated at the Roundhouse and Coal Harbour Community Centres to provide additional shelter capacity and a safe, supportive space for people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ERCs are on City-owned sites and the City is able to answer questions as they pertain to the Coal Harbour and Roundhouse ERCs; further information in regard to the Buchan Hotel or hotel operations should be directed to BC Housing.
- The information may be shared directly with community members in response to their queries.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to email Sandra Singh at Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca

Best,
Sadhu

Sadhu Aufochs Johnston | City Manager
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Pronouns: he, him, his



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.

MEMORANDUM

May 20, 2020

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Rena Kendall-Craden, Civic Engagement and Communications Director
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office

FROM: Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services

SUBJECT: Response to West End Journal's questions to City Council in regard to COVID-19 response

PURPOSE

This memo provides responses to questions from West End Journal regarding the City's COVID-19 response.

BACKGROUND

Homelessness continues to be a significant issue throughout the city and services and programs are in place to support those experiencing homelessness, as well as other residents at risk of homelessness. Emergency Response Centres (ERC) have been activated at the Roundhouse and Coal Harbour Community Centres to provide additional shelter capacity and a safe, supportive space for people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

DISCUSSION

ERCs are on City-owned sites, thus, the City is able to answer questions as they pertain to the Coal Harbour and Roundhouse ERCs; further information in regard to the Buchan Hotel, or hotel operations should be directed to BC Housing. Contact information is below.

Please see details in response to specific questions below:

1. Is the facility at CHCC exclusively for the use of homeless individuals referred by Vancouver Coastal Health, as originally announced?

Yes, all referrals are made by Vancouver Coastal Health and ERCs are targeted to individuals who are experiencing homelessness.

2. Is the facility at the Buchan Hotel exclusively for the use of homeless individuals or is also for use, as originally announced, by others who need to self-isolate, but have no place to do so?

BC Housing has secured local hotels as part of an initiative to provide places to self-isolate for people who are experiencing homelessness. The primary intent of using hotels for self-isolation is to help individuals who need a safe space. For more information regarding hotels operated in response to COVID-19, please contact BC Housing: communityrelations@bchousing.org

3. Will either or both facilities be accessed only by individuals who have not been tested, or have tested negative, or also by those who have tested positive and are awaiting the progress of their infection?

The ERCs at Coal Harbour and Roundhouse are not intended for individuals with COVID-19. They operate under the guidance of Vancouver Coastal Health, with Public Health teams carrying out proactive follow-up for suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases, and any potential exposures.

If a resident is symptomatic, spaces to self-isolate are available at the ERCS. If a resident has COVID-19, specialized transportation is arranged through Vancouver Coastal Health and they are moved to a hotel room where they can self-isolate. Standard Public Health contact tracing and management is also deployed.

For more information on the VCH COVID-19 Shelter Team, please visit their [website](#).

4. Are the individuals at either or both facilities free to come and go as they please? Both facilities have a contained outdoor area (the water-side patio at CHCC and a fenced in portion of a mini-park at the Buchan)

Guests at the ERCs and all shelters throughout the city are free to come and go as needed. The Coal Harbour and Roundhouse Emergency Response Centres provide a safe, temporary shelter, but do not restrict patrons' civil liberties and right of movement. Fenced areas at both Emergency Response Centres sites, as well as other hotels sites, have been set up as smoking areas.

5. Are accommodations being made for people with substance use disorders housed at either or both of these facilities, and if so what are they?

British Columbia is now facing two concurrent crises: the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing opioid overdose crisis. Coal Harbour and Roundhouse ERCs operate with a harm reduction mandate. VCH also provides access to urgent and primary care as well as prescribed medications to prevent withdrawal. Staff are also equipped and trained to manage overdoses if they occur.

Discarded needles in the area

Staff on site, including security, do patrols and take an active approach to needle cleanup. This is in addition to what is already done by the City's sanitation crews on their

daily rounds of the community. PHS' Spikes on Bikes program has also been notified of the operation of the emergency response centres and provides service calls to the community when needed. More information about the service provided by Spikes on Bikes is available [here](#).

6. Concern has been expressed about their accessing neighbourhood amenities such as public benches, coffee shops, and grocery stores where they will come in contact with local residents. What are the protocols and procedures in place for support workers and staff as they come and go at the facilities?

All staff at the ERCs and hotels have been trained by Public Health in Infection and Protection Control procedures. Staff wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when on shift, use staff-only washrooms, and have a staff-only area. Staff at the ERCs pose no greater risk of spreading the disease to the community than any other member of the public.

7. What security arrangements are in place at either facility to ensure adherence to such rules and procedures?

All hotels and ERCs are staffed 24/7 by experienced non-profit operators. Security at the ERCs include additional patrols of both inside and around the exterior of the building. The security team continually evaluates the effectiveness of these patrols by adjusting their approach during peak periods of activity. Security staff work with the non-profit operator staff to ensure the safety of both residents and neighbours.

8. Do Atira and Coastal Health have Good Neighbour Agreements in place with the City regarding their use of the Buchan Hotel and CHCC respectively?

Operators and guests sign a Good Neighbor Agreement. Vancouver Coastal Health is a supporting partner and doesn't have a good neighbour agreement as they are not the primary operator.

BC Housing funds and oversees the use of hotels in Vancouver that have been secured to house vulnerable people during this crisis. While we cannot disclose the locations and details about guests at these hotels, BC Housing can speak more broadly to how these sites are being operated. Please contact: communityrelations@bchousing.org

9. What can the community, individually or collectively, do to offer some form of welcoming support to the new neighbours?

The Coal Harbour Residents Association kindly made a donation of food items. The non-profit operators and ERC residents appreciate offers of support. Donations including socks, personal hygiene items, snacks, men's clothing and blankets are most welcomed. We recommend members of the public get in touch with BC Housing to enquire what donations would be helpful and how best to deliver any donations. Please contact BC Housing at: communityrelations@bchousing.org

We understand this is an unprecedented use of the community centres, but utilizing them in this way is important to prevent the spread of the virus. With regard to regular use of Community Centres, the City adheres to the recommendations by the Public Health Authority on when we can safely return to programming of these public spaces.

FINAL REMARKS

If Council has any further questions, please feel free to contact me directly at sandra.singh@vancouver.ca.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra Singh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sandra Singh
General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services

604.871.6858 | sandra.singh@vancouver.ca